

levels of analysis and identify the circumstances, and ideologies, that shape militants' choices of political strategies. Several of the contributors to *Deterring Terrorism* point in this direction when they say that terrorists should be presented with alternative courses of action. More generally, international policies and political environments could be designed in ways that might divert militants from deadly strategic choices.

Regional and International Relations of Central

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As many scholars interested in European affairs have noticed, academic as well as general interest in Central (and, one may add, Eastern) Europe has dropped markedly after the turn of the century. There is little doubt that this is due to the perceived stability of the area in the aftermath of the accession of its states to the European Union and NATO and the cooling down of violent conflicts in the former Soviet Union and Yugoslavia. A new major project on the topic was justifiable merely for this reason, but the current massive crisis in Europe, with its questioning of the basic assumptions of further economic and political integration inside the EU, provides a pressing necessity for such a book.

Zlatko Šabič and Petr Drulák have organized this edited volume around a collection of states deemed to be Central European (CE), namely, the Visegrad Four (Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovakia) plus Slovenia. These states are largely connected by their common roots in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, their past as former communist nations, and their joint accession to the European Union in 2004. A testimony to a good editorial job and intellectual courage, this classification was adopted by the contributors to the volume in a critical fashion, sometimes directly at odds with the initial assumptions. As Constantin Iordachi points out in his perceptive study of cultural debates surrounding the definition of the region, “lumping together CE countries in a single analytical unit makes sense only on well defined and issue-oriented research topics, for example, in view of their common imperial or communist legacies and their post-communist transformation. Although this contextual perspective may justify their common treatment, similarities should not be uncritically extended to all their historical or contemporary features” (p. 56).

This volume can be divided into four main thematic clusters. The first four studies lay out its conceptual framework and directly analyze the salience, usefulness, and precise composition of the concept of Central Europe. After the two editors introduce the theoretical framework, Drulák discusses previous efforts at defining and under-

standing the region from an international relations perspective, focusing on the roots of this thought in the work of scholars and politicians from the region from roughly the turn of the previous century until the 1950s. This chapter also raises interesting questions related to the parochialism of local IR scholars and their relative reticence in engaging with the work of their intellectual forefathers. While Iordache, as previously mentioned, discusses the region from the perspective of symbolic geographies as cultural representations, the study by Thomas Volgy, Patrick Rhamey, and Elizabeth Fausett takes an “outside look” at the region, focusing on international institutions, voting patterns in the United Nations General Assembly, and economic and political interactions, and it discusses whether other states can conceivably be members of a “CE neighbourhood.”

The second cluster comprises four studies concerned with the relations between the five states of CE and historical major powers and superpowers with vested interests in the region. Paul Luif and Vladimír Handl deal, respectively, with Austria and Germany, sketching the evolution of their policies toward the CE region in the dual framework of national interests and European integration. It is very interesting to note in this regard how the Austrian interest and involvement with the region waxed and waned in relation to its own economic woes, or how challenging it can be for Germany to deal with an area supposed by many to be its natural hegemonic backyard. Tamara Resler provides a chapter on important relations, especially in military and political security matters, between the United States and the five selected states, focusing somehow too much on policy-oriented editorials and journal articles. While insightful, Maria Raquel Freire's study dealing with the crucial interaction between the former hegemonic power, Russia, and CE countries, is, from a methodological perspective, the weak link of the volume as the author does not use any Russian-language sources or any sources in one of the local languages. English-language scholarship and translated documents strike me as insufficient for addressing such a complex problem at this level of scholarly research.

The third major thematic section of the volume is also the largest, comprising five policy- and organizational-oriented studies. Vít Střítecký analyzes security and securitization, focusing on the important topic of Atlanticism, which seems only natural given the local perception that the United States is the main security provider. In an interesting chapter about ethnic diversity management, Petra Roter draws attention to the still-simmering, unresolved issues concerning ethnic minorities, summoning an unusual academic boldness to reach the following conclusion: “[T]hat national minorities provide a bridge therefore appears more a myth; they are often more of an obstacle to the construction of neighbourliness, neighbourhood, or a region” (p. 195). Michal Kořan highlights the